

3.11 SAMSON, THE STRONG MAN

JUDGES 13 - 16

Long ago, when God told Moses to lead the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan, there were times when there would be disagreements among the people. There were so many people at that time that Moses couldn't help everyone solve their problems. Moses got other people, called "judges," to help him. The judges would listen to the problems the Israelites were having with each other and help find a solution.

The Israelites had a lot of trouble trying to obey God. They were so disobedient that God allowed the Philistines, who were enemies of the Israelites, to be rulers over them for forty years. It was during this time that a man named Samson was born. He would become a Judge. God gave Samson extra strength—more than all the other men. He could kill a lion with just his hands; he could escape easily if he were tied up; he could conquer a whole army by himself. He was very, very strong.

One day, Samson told some Philistines a story. He said, "If you can guess the end of the story, I'll give you some fine new clothes to wear." The Philistines went to Samson's wife and asked her to get the answer to the story. She bothered Samson about the answer for so long he finally told her. She told the answer to the Philistines. Samson was so angry that he went out and destroyed thirty men from one of the villages. Because of Samson's anger, his wife was taken from him and given to another man. Samson continued to use his strength to destroy more Philistine property. The Philistines were very angry with Samson.

Later, Samson met another woman he wanted for a wife. Her name was Delilah. Although Samson loved her, she was not a nice woman. She tried to get Samson to tell her why he was so strong. He told her if he were tied up with new ropes that had never been used, then he would lose his strength. Delilah told the Philistines the secret. Delilah tied Samson up, then shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are here to destroy you!" Samson immediately got up and broke the ropes as if they were threads. Delilah acted disappointed and cried, "Samson, don't tease me! Tell me the truth. How can you lose your strength?" Samson said, "Tie my hair up tightly in some cloth. I won't be able to escape. My strength will be gone." When Delilah did this, she shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are here to destroy you!" Samson immediately jumped up, his hair loosened from the cloth and he still had his strength.

Delilah kept bothering him more and more. She wouldn't stop. She wanted to know his secret. The Philistines were promising to pay her a lot of money for Samson's secret. Samson became so annoyed by her asking so many times, he finally told her the truth. Samson said, "I have never cut my hair. My hair is what gives me my strength." When Samson fell asleep, Delilah had someone cut off all of his hair. Suddenly, Samson began to lose his strength. When Delilah shouted for the Philistines, they were able to capture him. They hurt his eyes so he became blind. They put him in prison and made him work very hard.

But Samson's hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistine people began to tease Samson and demand that he show his strength again. The soldiers tied Samson up to two posts that held up the temple. Samson prayed for God to return his strength. Samson pulled the posts and the temple fell on all the people there. He destroyed more Philistines that day than ever before. This had been God's plan all along.

3.11 SAMSON, THE STRONG MAN - TEACHER'S GUIDE

JUDGES 13 - 16

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1) When Moses was leading the Israelite people to the promised land of Canaan, he chose judges to help him. If there were problems among the people, the judges would help solve the problems.
- 2) Many years later, a man named Samson was born. He would become a judge of the Israelites. God blessed him with extra strength.
- 3) Samson showed his strength in many ways. But no one knew why he was so strong. The Philistines promised Samson's wife, Delilah, a lot of money to find out Samson's secret. When Delilah tried to convince Samson to tell her his secret, he would not tell her the truth. He wanted to keep the secret to himself.
- 4) Delilah bothered Samson over and over about the real reason for his strength. He finally decided to tell her. He told her his hair had never been cut. This was why he was so strong.
- 5) Delilah had tricked him. When Samson was asleep, she had someone cut all his hair off. Samson's strength began to leave him. He was captured by the Philistines, blinded and taken to prison.
- 6) After some time went by, Samson's hair was growing again. When the Philistine people asked to see Samson show his strength again, some soldiers tied him to two posts that held up the temple. Samson prayed to God, asking for his strength to return. Samson pulled the posts and the temple fell on all the people there. This was God's plan all along.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) How had God blessed Samson?
- 2) Who wanted to know the secret of Samson's strength?
- 3) What was Samson's wife's name?
- 4) What did Delilah find out about Samson's strength?
- 5) What happened when Delilah found out the truth?
- 6) How did God help Samson?

ANSWERS:

- 1) God blessed Samson with extra strength.
- 2) The Philistines wanted to know the secret of Samson's strength.
- 3) Samson's wife was named Delilah.
- 4) Delilah found out that Samson's hair had never been cut. That was why he was so strong.
- 5) Delilah told the Philistines the secret and they cut Samson's hair. He lost his strength. They captured him and took him to prison.
- 6) God gave Samson his strength back.